



INJURED DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND WILDLIFE

General Order Number: 13.1

Effective Date: 04/09/2024

POLICY:

Members of the department frequently encounter calls for service regarding sick, injured, or dangerous animals.

It is the policy of the Brookline Police Department that all such situations shall be handled in the most humane manner possible under the circumstances. The safety of the public shall be the first priority in dealing with such matters.

In dealing with injured animals, members should try to remain in an advisory capacity if the owner of the animal is present. When the owner of the animal is not present or is unknown to the officer, the officer shall follow the procedures as set forth below.

PROCEDURES:

A. SICK OR INJURED ANIMALS: With the incidence of rabies spreading, officer safety is paramount. ALWAYS remember that stray dogs, cats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats carry a special danger of rabies infection. Rabid animals can be aggressive, vicious, and can attack blindly and without warning. **NEVER** pick up or handle any wildlife or suspicious dog or cat even if they appear tame.

1. In all cases of sick or injured animals investigated by a member of the department, no action with respect to destruction and/or disposal of the animal shall be taken, without first attempting to contact an Animal Control Officer. If an Animal Control Officer is able to respond, they shall assume responsibility, and officers shall assist as appropriate. In all cases where there is injury to a domestic animal caused by another animal or by human, a report shall be submitted documenting the nature of the incident and requesting follow-up with the Animal Control Officer as needed.
2. If an Animal Control Officer is not available, the following procedures shall apply:
 - a. For Domestic Animals, the Officer shall attempt to identify and contact the owner of the animal and, if this is done, the question of treatment or disposal of the animal shall be left to the discretion of the owner. **If the animal is suspected of being in contact with a rabid animal or exhibits any signs, the owner should be cautioned against exposure, and the animal should be tested at the State Lab. Animal Control Officers should be notified**

to take appropriate action, which will include the destruction or transportation of the animal.

If the department is unable to contact the owner, the officer shall contact the Veterinarian authorized by the Town to advise and act in such matters. If the vet requests that the animal be transported to the clinic for treatment, their request shall be honored. The Animal Control Officer shall be contacted for appropriate transportation. **Under no circumstances shall a sick, injured, or dead animal be transported by cruiser or patrol wagon. These vehicles are for transportation of humans ONLY.**

If a sick or injured domestic animal requires transportation and Animal Control is not available, call the MSPCA. This phone number can be obtained from the dispatcher.

If neither the owner nor the veterinarian can be contacted, the officer shall advise the Patrol Supervisor of all the circumstances and be guided by his/her instructions.

- b.** For wild animals, if the Animal Control Officer is not available, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - i.** If the animal is uninjured and is not creating a threat or danger, it should be allowed to return to its natural habitat. The decision to destroy an animal should be based on whether the animal is sick or poses a danger.
 - ii.** If the decision is made not to destroy an animal in a residence or business and a problem exists, a property owner, with the assistance of the patrol officer, should be referred to one of the following:
 - A.) Animal Control Officer
 - B.) Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
 - C.) Licensed Trapper or Nuisance Control Specialist (Numbers available through dispatcher)
 - iii.** If the animal is sick or injured or has been in contact with humans or pets to the extent that humanity requires it be removed from further suffering, the officer shall take appropriate action under department procedures outlined below.

- B. DANGEROUS ANIMALS:** Officers dealing with dangerous animals shall contact the Animal Control Officer if time and circumstances permit. If the Animal Control Officer responds, the officer shall assist as appropriate in a manner consistent with these regulations and law.

- C. **BATS:** When officers are dispatched to a call to assist with a bat, the call taker should attempt to determine if there was any contact or exposure to humans or domestic animals. The definition of exposure in this case includes the presence of a bat in a room with sleeping humans, unattended young children or individuals whose cognitive or mental health status might make it difficult to understand if contact was made. Domestic animals found unattended in a room with a bat should also be considered “exposed.”

If a bat meets any of the above criteria for an exposure, the bat must be captured and transported to the state lab, if possible. When submitting any animal, including a bat for rabies testing at the State Lab, officers should make sure the animal is in fact dead. Rabies testing requires the specimen’s brain, so trauma to the animal’s head should be avoided whenever possible. The Animal Control Officer shall be notified to accomplish this.

If the Animal Control Officer is not available and the bat cannot be captured, all persons potentially exposed to the bat should be advised to seek immediate medical evaluation. The parents or guardians of any minors potentially exposed to the bat should be contacted and advised to seek medical evaluation for the minor. The Animal Control Officer will complete a report and ensure that all exposure forms and reports are forwarded to the Brookline Health Department for review.

- D. **DESTROYING AND SECURING OF INJURED, SICK, OR DANGEROUS ANIMALS:** When any animal must be destroyed, and after all previously mentioned procedures have been complied with, officers shall comply with the following:

1. The Patrol Supervisor must be notified and have given permission prior to the destruction of the animal, unless this is not possible due to emergency circumstances. The Commanding Officer - Platoon on Duty shall have final discretion regarding the destruction of animals.
2. The killing of the animal shall be done in such a manner that the public is not endangered by a ricocheting bullet. The use of a Remington 12-gauge shotgun by qualified officers is the preferred method of destruction. In situations where it is not safe to destroy an animal due to its location, an animal control pole will be kept in the Animal Control Vehicle. It should be used to move the animal to a location that minimizes the threat of bullet ricochet.
3. If possible, the killing of the animal in the presence of the public, and particularly the presence of children, will be avoided.
4. A full report shall be submitted if a wild animal is euthanized due to being sick, injured, or a danger to the community. The report shall document, at a minimum, the reasons for the destruction, weapon/method utilized, and safety precautions taken. Law enforcement agencies are not required to report the discharge of a firearm as a “use of force” for the purpose of animal euthanasia with regard to wild animals. If a domestic animal (i.e., “pet”) is euthanized, a use of force shall be completed in accordance with the Brookline Police Department’s use of Force policy. In addition, the report shall

document, at a minimum, the reasons for the destruction, weapon/method utilized, and safety precautions taken.

5. In the event the Animal Control Officer is not available, the responding officer will be responsible for securing and destroying the animal in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. After the animal is destroyed, the Public Works Department shall be notified for removal. At **NO** time should a destroyed animal be placed in the cruiser trunk.
- b. The officer will stand by until Public Works Department Personnel arrive with proper equipment to remove the animal. The animal will be removed and the area of disposal disinfected by the Public Works Department.
- c. The officer is to ensure the animal is transported to the proper location.

- i. If the animal is to be tested for rabies:

During normal working hours, the animal shall be taken to the State Labs.

After Hours/Weekends/Holidays, if the State lab is not open then the animal should be placed in the animal control refrigerator (**NOT THE FREEZER**). All bags should be marked with: type of animal, location, and incident number.

- ii. If the animal need not be tested, the Public Works Department shall dispose and no further action required.

- E. HUMAN CONTACT SITUATIONS:** Defined as bites, scratches, including blood or saliva on skin or mucous membranes, or if a pet is bitten by a wild animal and a person has contact with the pet's open wound.

1. **CONTACT AREA:** The contact area should be washed immediately with soap and water, and then flushed with clean water for several minutes. Apply disinfectant, if available, and seek medical attention in accordance with Brookline Police Department procedures. (See Infectious Diseases, of the Brookline Police Department Manual.)
2. **HUMAN CONTACT:** All animal contact will require a report by the officer.

The following information **MUST** be in the report:

1. Names
2. Addresses
3. Telephone Numbers
4. Location of contact with animal
5. Types of animals involved, and
6. Name of doctor caring for individual

F. ANIMAL CONTACT: Bites or scratches to animals from an unknown source **MUST** be reported to the Animal Control Officer, and the animal should be treated by a veterinarian. Humans should take precautionary measures with these animals also.